THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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Twelve Years of Communist Government By J. R. C.

The I.L.P. and Brighton By IDRIS COX

Party Discussion By J. T. MURPHY: REG. GROVES, London D.P.C.

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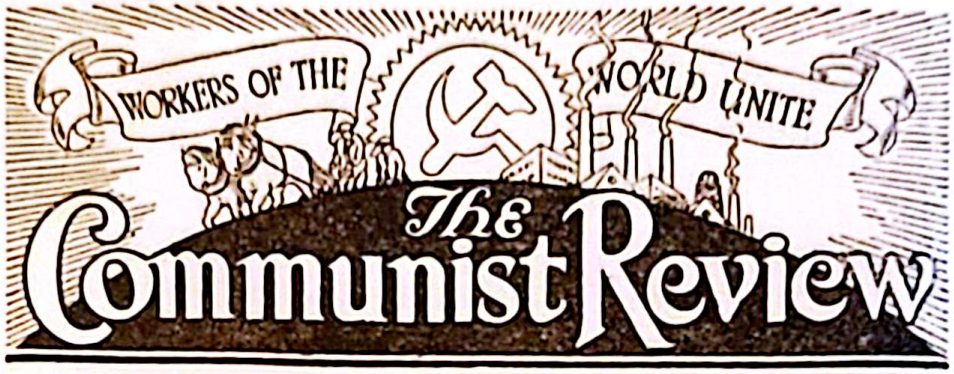

Vol. 1 No. 11 November 1929

THE OUTLOOK

THE Twelfth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution is taking place in a situation which is growing more favourable, not only for a definite victory of the Russian Revolution, but for the development of the world revolution as a whole. In spite of the feverish rationalisation drive, the unemployed army is growing to huge dimensions in the leading capitalist countries, and warlike antagonisms are developing at an unprecedented speed. The very fury of the rationalisation drive is calling forth a tremendous wave of working class resistance which is shaking capitalism to its foundations. In the colonial countries, in India and China particularly, we are witnessing a rapid development of a new phase of the revolutionary struggle. The peace chatter of the leading capitalist statesmen cannot conceal the growing contradictions of the capitalist order of society. Alongside this sharpening of the revolutionary situation we see the magnificent progress of the Soviet Union which in itself is further undermining the already tottering capitalist stabilisation.

* * * * *

In Britain and in Germany we have Labour Governments or Labour Coalition Governments in office. These Governments are led by men who, on selected occasions, pretend that they are leading the workers to Socialism in a more peaceful and effective manner than the Workers' Government in Russia; for example, Mr. MacDonald addressing the American Federation of Labour at Toronto outlined his policy as follows:

> "British organised industrial labour was working out a great public philosophy, not by revolutionary means which were bound to be temporary, but by evolutionary means which had a chance of permanence. The outward change

> created by revolution might give certain classes and sections new power, but no sooner were they enthroned in office than they had to turn back as responsible rulers and face precisely the same problems which they were facing in Britain to-day without any preliminary revolution. The revolution we believe in is the revolution of the ballot box. If we cannot make changes by appeals to reason and commonsense, you can make no permanent changes in social constructions of nations."

Is this true? No, it is not. It is the most pitiable claptrap. The Russiam revolution, for example, freed the subject peoples in Russia, gave them complete right of self-determination, opened out the possibility of cultural development, established papers and books in their own language, allowed them to develop their autonomous republics, and so on. On the other hand, the British imperialist Labour Government has imposed treaties of military and political subjection on Egypt and Iraq, is forcibly suppressing the Arabs in Palestine, is endeavouring to strangle the revolutionary movement in India, and is generally maintaining the same brutal suppression of the colonial peoples as under Toryism. The Russian revolution enabled the workers of Russia to solve their colonial question. Social-Fascism, so far from solving the colonial question, continues openly and brutally the militarist repression of Toryism.

* * * * *

Can it be said that the British Labour Government is facing and solving without a revolution the same problems that the Russian workers are facing and solving as a result of their revolution? This is nonsense. The Russian workers are putting through a great Five Years' Plan of socialist construction and on the basis of this Plan are aiming to increase wages 75 per cent., to universalise the 7-hour day, to increase the amount devoted to social service for the workers by 27 per cent. They have commenced to draw millions of peasants into the work of establishing a Socialist agricultural system. The Russian Workers' Government is able in the great Socialist competition movement, in productive conferences in the factories, to call forth the latent talent of the workers and use them for purposes of Socialist reconstruction. It is promoting the best brains of the working class to the most responsible posts in industry and in government.

In Great Britain the Labour Government is promoting capitalist reconstruction at the expense of the working class, which means not increased application of science to industry, but the inhuman slave-driving of the working class. If in the carrying through of this rationalisation the Labour Government is faced with the demand from the capitalists to scrap the promises which

they had given to the workers, as in the case of the restoration of the 7 hours day in the mining industry, then the promises are scrapped. In order to quicken the pace of rationalisation the Labour Government facilitates wage cuts and keeps unemployment relief on a low level. To say that the Labour Government is tackling the same problems as the Russian workers as the consequence of the revolution is to tell a manifest lie. The Russian workers are building up a Workers' order of society, but the MacDonald Government is degrading the British working class in the interests of capital reconstruction.

* * * * *

In regard to foreign policy, we see the divergent aims of both Governments. In Soviet Russia production is being developed to satisfy the expanding needs of the working class and of the peasantry. The greater part of the difficulties which still concern the working class of Russia can be traced back to insufficient productive capacity as compared with the expanding needs of the workers, hence the great drive to realise the Five Years' Plan in four years. In Britain and the capitalist world generally, production is carried on for profit. Productive capacity is far in excess of the absorbing power of the shrinking world market. Hence the fiercer struggle of all the imperialist States for more markets and colonies as a condition of their further development. Thus, while Russia can develop without colonies and spoliation, because every increase of productive capacity goes to the benefit of the working class, the capitalist world, bent on profits, can only secure further markets and can only develop through war for colonies and spheres of influence. While, therefore, the policy of Soviet Russia is fundamentally a policy of freedom for subject people and Socialist reconstruction, the policy of the MacDonald Government is a policy of capitalist rationalisation and war.

* * * * *

MacDonald's argument is but a repetition of the old Social-Democratic argument that as revolution cannot at once create new economic conditions, it cannot in the long run free the workers, and that, therefore, in spite of the revolution, Russia is developing back to capitalism. This argument, very popular with the Social-Democrats, is now being blown sky-high by the development of Socialist reconstruction in Russia. Michael Farbman, late correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, has had to recant his past views on this question. In the *Daily Herald* of October 15th, he says:

> "My last visits were made in 1924 and my impression of the effects of the introduction of this policy (new economic policy) were so definite that in my book *After Lenin* I made bold to declare that both in the towns and

> the villages the trend of economic development was definitely towards some modified form of capitalism. The greater, consequently, was the surprise awaiting me when I arrived in Moscow this summer and found a people feverishly active in building up a society which can in no way be identified with Western conceptions of capitalism. I was not long in discovering that the new economic policy, at least in the towns, is practically dead, that trade, as well as production, is almost entirely in the hands of the State and the co-operatives, and that reconstruction, the order of the day, is rapidly being carried out with a determination to create new and distinct social and economic values. As an observer of conditions and tendencies, I feel safe in stating that the essence of the Bolshevik reconstruction to-day is not reconstruction simple, but socialist reconstruction, with an emphasis on the adjective."

Thus the predictions of the Social-Democrats about Russia developing back to capitalism are being falsified by the facts.

* * * * *

Of course, the Left-hand of MacDonald, the I.L.P. and the pseudo-Lefts generally, will declare that the MacDonald Government is pursuing a capitalist policy instead of a Socialist policy because it has deliberately chosen to pursue a capitalist policy, and that the Labour Government might equally choose to pursue a Socialist policy under their leadership, and they could then, through Parliament, commence Socialist reconstruction equally as well as, if not better than, the Russian workers were able to do as a consequence of the Russian revolution.

Let us see if this is so. There can be no question that the rise in the bank rate, because it interferes with rationalisation plans and with employment generally, was not welcomed enthusiastically by the Labour Government. The "Lefts" at the I.L.P. Conference demanded that the Government should not sanction the increase in the bank rate. This is merely a hypocritical attempt to sham opposition, but even it if were a proposal which the pseudo-Lefts believed that the Government could operate its Utopian character is apparent.

It is no more possible for a Labour Government operating under capitalist society to regulate the bank rate than it is possible to regulate the rise and fall of the tide. The Labour Government by its very character is compelled to leave the basis of economic life in the hands of the capitalist class. Having done so, it cannot stop the flow of capital in the hands of private persons from Gt. Britain, where they can get 5½ per cent., to America, where they

can get 9 per cent. or 10 per cent. for financing speculations on the Stock Exchange. If the Labour Government does not desire to see the whole of the economic system of Great Britain upset, it must make it profitable for these people to bring their money back to Britain again, and the only way in which it can do so is to increase the bank rate, whatever results this may have for the policy of capitalist rationalisation which the Labour Government is trying to carry through. The existence of a State Bank would not alter the position in the slightest. The financial resources in the country would still be the private property of the capitalist class, who would be free to divert these resources from use in British industry to use elsewhere, providing it is more profitable to do so.

It is thus trickery for the pseudo-Lefts to suggest that the Labour Government could use the powers of Parliament in order to control the capitalist class. The capitalist State machine, on which Parliament is merely a democratic fig-leaf, is not a neutral body standing above the classes. It is an organisation developed by the capitalist class for the suppression of the working class. All the key positions in this State machine—in the higher ranks of the Civil Servants, in the Army, Navy and Air Force, on the judicial bench—are held by the key men of the capitalist class, bound to the capitalist class by close social and financial ties. Any attempt of a Socialist Parliamentary Government to utilise this machine to interfere with capitalist property would provoke the resistance of these elements, would lead to their combination with Fascist organisations developed by the capitalist class and would confront the Socialist Government with the choice of mobilising the workers to smash this capitalist State machine, setting up in its place their own Workers' Government based on Workers' Councils (or Soviets), or the choice of surrendering to the capitalist class. The I.L.P. knows this. It knows that all Socialist Parties claiming to be able to emancipate the workers through Parliament, whether led by the Right-wing MacDonald or by the "pseudo-Left" Austro-Marxists, always surrender to the capitalist class and become powerful instruments of capitalist suppression of the working class. The I.L.P. has no more intention than MacDonald of endeavouring to lead a Socialist fight inside Parliament. It seeks to create the illusion that there is an alternative between the policy of revolution and the open capitalist policy of MacDonald, because it desires to keep the workers attached to the Labour Government and the Labour Government's policy of rationalisation and war.

MacDonald's idea of appeal to the reason and common-sense of the capitalist class in order to make permanent changes in the social construction of nations is a rich one. We do not see under his Government any signs of the capitalist class accepting the reason and commonsense of Socialism. On the contrary, we have seen the Labour Party being convinced of the reason and commonsense of capitalism and transforming itself into the complete Social-Fascist Party, the enemy of the working class.

The idea of the capitalists being reasoned into giving up their power and their privileges is deception of the workers. Equally fraudulent, however, is the idea of the workers under capitalism being educated into being good Socialist citizens as a preliminary to bringing about Socialism. It has always been one of the prime differences between the Socialist revolution and the capitalist revolution against feudalism that whereas in the capitalist revolution the capitalist class had already, before the revolution, become culturally more advanced than the feudal ruling class, in the Socialist revolution the working class, which is politically oppressed and culturally down-trodden under capitalism, only transforms its own nature in the struggle to build up Socialism after it has taken power from the capitalism class. Revolution is not only necessary because there is no other way of overthrowing the ruling class, but also because only in the process of revolution is the overthrowing class able to purge itself of the dross of the old society and become capable of creating a new society. The transformation of the proletarian into the Socialist citizen is only possible after the Social Revolution.

* * * * *

The more Socialism develops in Russia, the more capitalist stabilisation is being undermined; the more the revolutionary situation develops in the capitalist countries, the more it is necessary for the Communist Parties to prepare the working class for the struggle for the establishment of the Revolutionary Workers' Government. We can see the developing revolutionary situation expressing itself in a rising wave of struggle in imperialist countries, in the growing revolutionary revolt in the colonies, in the developing war danger. We do not know whether the situation will become directly revolutionary as the result of the outbreak of war or as a result of an economic or political crisis developing within some capitalist country. All Communist Parties must, therefore, be prepared for all eventualities.

The Revolutionary Workers' Government will be impossible without the overthrow of the capitalist class by the working

class, whose forces are concentrated in specially developed mass organs—Soviets—under the leadership of the Communist Party. When the workers organise in Soviets, after smashing the capitalist State, the Soviet form of organisation becomes the basis of the new Workers' State. While the Soviets can only be set up, therefore, when the situation is directly revolutionary the Soviet idea must be popularised beforehand. This is one of the paramount necessities of the present moment. We must link up all our struggles for partial demands with our goal—the Revolutionary Workers' Government, not merely using this as a phrase, but explaining what it is and how the struggles of the workers must be directed towards its establishment.

To make this struggle real the Party has before it the task of establishing the *Daily Worker* and penetrating the factories and building strong Communist organisations there. Unless we gather round our Party and attach as readers of our Party paper hundreds and thousands of workers in the principal factories and industrial centres, we are not in a position to mobilise the working class for the fight in defence of the Soviet Union and for the revolutionary struggle for power. That is why it is so necessary to carry on the fight against the Right danger at the present moment, not only in the leadership of the Party (which is, of course, the most important), but right throughout the Party organisation. The struggle against the Right danger will be a long and bitter struggle, and while the Party Congress will mark a certain stage in the struggle of the Party to overcome this danger, after the Congress this struggle will still go on. Only by eliminating the Right danger from our ranks, by building our basic organisations in the factory, by linking up our revolutionary aim—the Revolutionary Workers' Government—with every partial struggle, by seeking to unify the isolated economic struggles into large-scale political strikes, will we be able to develop the struggle for establishing a Revolutionary Workers' Government.

To those in the Party and amongst our sympathisers who are sceptical about the new line we would suggest that the clear lesson to be drawn on the Twelfth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution is that the Bolshevik way is the only way to victory, that whoever cuts himself adrift from the Communist International and its policy will sooner or later find himself in the camp of capitalist reaction.

On this Twelfth Anniversary, therefore, let us learn from the heroic example of our Russian brother Party and go forward to the struggle for a mass Bolshevik Party in Great Britain.

J. R. C.

Brighton and the I.L.P.

By IDRIS COX

A PERUSAL of the agenda of the Brighton Labour Party Conference was, in itself, quite sufficient to indicate the character of the Conference, even before it commenced. The agenda was mainly concerned with the proposed draft rules and constitution. There were very few resolutions, and most of them were of minor importance. Even the resolutions on the agenda (apart from one on Industrial Peace submitted by the N.A.F.T.A.) bore witness to the absence of an organised Left opposition within the Labour Party; but the speeches at the Conference itself were conclusive proof of the unanimity among all sections in the Conference on the basic lines of the Labour Government's policy.

Until 1927 there was present at each Conference a Communist and Left-wing opposition, making a frontal attack against the platform, and (except for one or two individual members) the I.L.P. was pushed to the background. When the Communists were expelled, the I.L.P. expressed fond hopes that it would now assume what it termed as its "rightful place as the organised Left." No better opportunity for a real Left opposition has ever been presented than the opportunity afforded by the Brighton Labour Party Conference. The I.L.P. made a show of Left phrases, but its attitude at the Conference did not show any fundamental difference with the policy of the Labour Government. *It did not function as a real Left opposition—it merely served the purpose of screening the imperialist policy of the Labour Government.*

The character of the "opposition" put forward by the I.L.P. was shown most clearly in the debate on Children's Allowances and also on the paragraph on Unemployment in the Report of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The I.L.P. resolution* on Children's Allowances was really wider in its application, for it embraced the whole living wage policy of the I.L.P. The complete resolution was as follows:

* All the other resolutions were referred to the Executive.

> "This Conference expresses its view that it is the primary purpose of a Labour Government to direct its energies to securing for all who render useful service to the community, a return for their labour sufficient to meet adequately all the needs of the citizen, his wife, and his family. The Conference, therefore, believes that the great poverty and insecurity of life afflicting large numbers of people can be alleviated quickly by the Government drastically increasing the taxation of the wealthy to provide for a wide development of the social services including an effective system of children's allowances."

The actual wording of the resolution is important because it shows the attempt to avoid wage struggles and to create the illusion that "a Labour Government" will do all that is necessary for the workers. After four months' experience of the present Labour Government, in which its attitude to the textile workers and the miners has already been made clear, the I.L.P. still asks the workers to place their faith in "a Labour Government." This is the policy of the "organised Left"! But while the I.L.P. speakers were anxious to deny any intention of attacking the Labour Government, the whole purpose underlying their speeches was to give the impression that "*a* Labour Government" (under the control of the I.L.P.) would be a government in the interests of the workers. The sheer hypocrisy of such an attitude was made manifest in Maxton's speech, when he made the most pitiful and abject apology for the action of Cramp and Walkden in recommending a reduction in wages for the Lancashire textile workers. He claimed there would have been no need to "force" Cramp and Walkden into the position of recommending reductions if the Labour Government were "armed" with the principle of the living wage! He claimed that the absence of this "principle" left the dispute "either to mere bargaining or to a crude struggle between masters and men." According to Maxton it was neither the fault of the Government nor of the Arbitration Board; it was merely the absence of a "principle"!

The specific issue of Children's Allowances was opposed by the majority of the trade union leaders who claimed that such allowances would give the employers an opportunity to reduce wages. Judged from the point of view of those who believe that "clever negotiation" is the deciding factor in determining the level of wages, it is natural they should regard Children's Allowances as an argument for the employers to reduce wages. Alex Gossip pointed out (and rightly so) that the employers will attack wages without waiting for the excuse provided by Children's

Allowances; but even Gossip supported Children's Allowances without qualification, and did not attempt to expose this proposal of the I.L.P. as a means of avoiding wage struggles and creating the illusion that a Labour Government would assist the workers. Not one delegate pointed out the fact that it was precisely the Labour Government which *led the attack* upon the workers, and that the I.L.P. was assisting this attack by providing excuses for the Labour Government, and acquiescing in wage reductions on the strength of the "principle" of the Living Wage! And the statement of Maxton that "We have to get out of capitalism and into socialism, not by increasing misery but by increasing standards of life" is a cunning way in which the sham Lefts endeavour to hide their treachery.

Of all the questions debated at the Conference there were none in which so much hypocrisy was shown as there was on the question of those unemployed workers disqualified from benefit. Although there are many other grievances among unemployed workers, etc., the debate centred almost entirely on the clause"Not genuinely seeking work." There is no doubt that the I.L.P. is very much concerned with the growing discontent among the unemployed workers, and is anxious to prevent this discontent being harnessed by the N.U.W.C.M. in a struggle against the Labour Government. It is also significant that the Labour M.P.'s and Labour candidates, in constituencies with a large percentage of unemployed workers, were foremost in the Conference debate on this question, and it was obvious from their speeches that they were only scared with the possibility of losing the votes and support of unemployed workers to whom such elaborate promises were given at the General Election. The trade union delegates (S. O. Davies, for instance) were concerned with losing the contributions of unemployed workers to the coffers of the union which aimed to bind them to the trade union apparatus and prevent them being mobilised under the banner of the N.U.W.C.M.

There was, however, no attack upon the policy of the Labour Government. The whole line of the speeches was to appeal to the Government to bring pressure to bear upon the Ministry of Labour to effect administrative changes, as if the Government policy and the Ministry of Labour policy were distinct and apart from each other. There was some controversy as to whether the Minister of Labour could effect these changes without legislative action, and it was interesting to hear Clynes put forward the case that nothing could be done without legislation, especially when com-

pared with the boost given by the *Daily Herald* to his condemnation of *administrative* persecution during the later stages of the Baldwin Government. The kernel of all the speeches was the need of "humanising the administration of the Act" and was expressed most clearly by Campbell Stephen, who wanted the Minister of Labour "to carry out the law to protect the unemployed workers"! It was a fitting end to the debate that Lansbury should reply and point out that it was precisely because the law was being carried out that the so-called secret circular was sent to Labour Exchanges (depriving sick workers of a week's benefit) arising from the decision of the Umpire. After the chairman had made it clear that the Cabinet's policy could not be discussed or questioned at the Conference, it was only to be expected that the *New Leader's* "beloved George Lansbury" should save the skin of the I.L.P. by stating that the reference back did not mean a vote of censure either on the Government or the Ministry of Labour, *but on the Parliamentary Labour Party, the majority being composed of members of the I.L.P.!* The reference back was defeated by a small majority.

It is also very necessary to understand the real purpose of the I.L.P. in making a distinction between the home policy of the Labour Government and its foreign policy. Praises are showered upon its policy at the Hague Conference, Geneva Conference, MacDonald's "Peace" policy with America, evacuation of the Rhine, its proposed treaty with Egypt; but in the words of the *New Leader*, the I.L.P. "expects the Ministers whose job it is to tackle the problems on the home front to show the same dash and determination." This was an important feature brought out by the I.L.P. in the debate on disqualification from unemployment benefit, and also in their attitude on the increased Bank Rate. This distinction between home policy and foreign policy is useful to the I.L.P. in many respects. First, it is easier to deceive the workers on foreign policy than on home policy; secondly, it creates the illusion that Ministers dealing with foreign policy are imbued with a "new spirit" while those dealing with home policy "are afflicted with a queer kind of blindness" and all that is necessary is that they also should be imbued with this "new spirit"; thirdly, it enables the I.L.P. to pose as a "loyal" critic on home policy while advocating full support for the Labour Government on account of its "success in foreign affairs" and the era of "peace" which is being brought in. This enables the I.L.P. to have free play to criticise, because such criticism can never develop to the point of an open break with the Labour Government.

This fallacy of the I.L.P. was effectively exposed in a Party leaflet dealing with the increased Bank Rate and distributed to the delegates on the same day as Snowden spoke at the Conference. The I.L.P. leaders, during the early part of the week, submitted an emergency resolution on this question, and the opinion was freely expressed that it was a "plot of the financiers to discredit the Labour Government." Some leaders of the I.L.P. (Kirkwood and Brailsford) declared that Snowden should translate his firmness at the Hague to the financiers responsible for the increased Bank Rate. The Party leaflet exposed such hypocrisy and pointed out that the increased Bank Rate was in line with Snowden's policy at the Hague and was a necessary part of the whole imperialist policy of the Labour Government. Snowden's Conference speech justified every word of the Party leaflet. His declaration that he agreed with the increased Bank Rate did not even evoke a protest from the I.L.P.; they agreed entirely with Snowden and withdrew the resolution on the strength of a promised inquiry.

The attitude of the I.L.P. (and particularly Maxton and Co.) at the Labour Party Conference clearly shows the necessity for a complete exposure of these sham "Lefts." The more openly the Labour Government attacks the workers, the more will the sham "Lefts" endeavour to hide its treachery and endeavour to prevent the workers waging a determined struggle against the Labour Government. It is more than ever necessary for the Party to regard the I.L.P. and the sham "Lefts" as the most dangerous enemies of the workers and to advance our Party as the only leader of the working class in its struggle against capitalism and its chief instrument, the capitalist Labour Government.

The Fight against the Right Danger

By J. T. MURPHY

THE Eleventh Party Congress will undoubtedly be the most serious gathering in the history of our Party. For the first time in our experience it has been hastened by a revolt of the membership and the pressure of the E.C.C.I. against the Executive of the Party. This, of course, is not an accident, as everyone must recognise. It is neither due to fractional activities nor personal ambitions. It is symptomic of the process through which the whole of the Communist International is passing and is inseparable from the needs of the new period of revolutionary struggle now opening before the proletariat.

It is therefore essential that we grasp the central features of this period and the tasks arising therefrom if we are to make the forthcoming Party Congress into an effective means of re-vitalising and redirecting the party on correct lines.

There is a great danger, however, of simply looking for all the phenomena analysed in the Sixth World Congress and the Tenth Plenum *re* the British situation, and merely tabulating them instead of grasping the central, dominating feature of the period especially in relation to Britain, and relating all other things to it. This, in my opinion, is exemplified in the C.C. resolution published in the September issue of the *Communist Revew*. It is a kind of " hot pot " containing everything from a characterisation of the " third period " to factory groups, but it is difficult to tell what is the central feature of the situation and what the principal task. All features of the new period appear to be principal features, all tasks principal tasks.

The resolution is divided into four parts, viz.: a summary of the Tenth Plenum resolution, Gt. Britain in the " third period," the situation in the Party, the tasks of the Party. I am of the opinion that this structure is not sound and that it would have been better to have dealt with the self-criticism of the Party and the inner-Party situaton on the basis of the study of the objective

situation and the tasks arising therefrom, and then in the light of this analysis have reviewed our mistakes and the state of the Party to undertake the tasks which the situation demands.

Britain in the Third Period

But let us deal with the section "Britain in the third period." This is not an analysis of Britain in this period leading to certain conclusions and a principal conclusion which must dominate and determine the work of the Party from now onwards. It is not an analysis but a description of "the situation when the Labour Government took office," and draws the moral that economic battles of the workers "must be developed into a political struggle against the Labour Government and for the Revolutionary Workers' Government."

Paragraph 16 draws the conclusion that we are at the opening of a new revolutionary struggle for power. But Paragraph 17 leads to the inevitability of war, concluding with "Any agreement (between Britain and U.S.A.) which is arrived at will be merely a stage in the preparation for war." So it would appear that although we have entered a new period of revolutionary struggle for power, the inevitable war supersedes it. Paragraph 17 tells of the difficulties of British capitalism and how the Labour Government is called in to the rescue and how well equipped it is for the job, concluding as already quoted.

Paragraph 18 switches off to speak of the illusions of the workers *re* the Labour Government and the opportunities before us for the creation of a mass Communist Party. Paragraph 19 describes the background of the General Election. Paragraphs 20 and 21 tell us of the revival of working class action, the growing number of strikes, and again inform us that this "is the opening of a new period of revolutionary struggle for a Revolutionary Workers' Government." Paragraph 22 tells us of the differentiation in the Labour Party, and Paragraph 23 finishes the analysis of Britain in the third period by telling us of the rôle of the I.L.P.

All references to Britain in relation to the Empire in this period are absent and no conclusions are drawn from this review. The resolution leaves us in a quandary and each of us must draw his own conclusions as to what is the principal feature of the period. We are left to our independent judgment to estimate whether the forces making for revolution are moving more rapidly than the forces towards war, whether the revolution can precede war or whether war has to precede revolution.

The Roots of Vacillation

This indecisiveness must of necessity give rise to numberless vacillations. This indecisiveness does not characterise the Tenth Plenum resolution. It not only rejected the attempts of Com. Campbell to revise the Sixth Congress estimate of the British situation, but emphasised that we are in the period of maturing revolutionary crisis. The C.C. resolution says this when summarising the Tenth Plenum resolution in the first part of its own and repeats it among other things in its analysis of the British situation, but as I have already shown, does not make this the principal motive of the situation governing all our tasks whether they be the fight against the war danger or the building of factory groups. The Party cannot afford to have this agnosticism which makes uncertainty a virtue.

The sequel is seen in the section on the tasks of the Party. Paragraph 45 begins well. It tells us that the Party must win the independent leadership of the working class in all its struggles to win over the majority of the workers and to "lead them in the struggle for the revolutionary workers' Government." Paragraph 46 tells us we must link up all our campaigns with the struggle against "the war danger which remains the central point of all Party activity in the present period." Which *is* the central point of all our Party activity in the period of maturing revolution? Is it "the struggle against war" or is the struggle against war part of the struggle for the revolutionary workers' Government? If so, then the latter is the central point of all our activity. The struggle against war as outlined in Paragraph 46 says nothing whatever of this, but enumerates a lot of detailed jobs, all of which are important but detached from the main motive line of the Party in the present period. The same observation applies to all the tasks catalogued and detailed. They are neither placed in the order of their importance nor related to the principal line of Party development. Factory group organisation comes in once more as an appendix emphasised in a very categorical way but unrelated to the whole question of Party structure in relation to the main work of the period before us.

The resolution needs thoroughly overhauling so that the revolutionary perspectives before the working class are seen clearly and all other features of the "third period," the war danger, the rôle of social democracy, etc., related thereto. Then with our perspectives clear we can define the rôle of the Party in this period and the tasks before it as the leader of the revolutionary working

class. Nothing is more urgently needed to aid us in the process of self-criticism and the understanding of the vastness of the mistakes that have been made and the full significance of the fight against "the Right danger."

The anti-imperialist war campaign revealed as nothing else has ever done the glaring weaknesses of the Party in relation to our revolutionary tasks. One of the conclusions drawn from the campaign was the imperative need for factory groups. But this is not an isolated weakness. We have never yet considered Party building as a serious political question and planfully worked with a guiding principle determining the line of our development. We have grown haphazard, not only outside the factories, but in every way. We have never considered except in a very loose and general way which are the most important industries, which are the most important centres of these industries and which are the most important factories, etc., upon which to concentrate in order to deliver the most effective and vital blows at capitalism. But if we are to be a serious revolutionary Party there must be such guiding principles of our development. The absence of clear revolutionary perspectives and a lack of appreciation of the rôle of *the Party* as *the leader* of the forces of revolution are the basic reasons for these defects.

Vacillations and Right Mistakes

It was the absence of these which accounted for the resistance to the new line and the preservation of bureaucracy in the Party by the majority of the C.C. before the Ninth Plenum. They had only social-democratic perspectives—the return of a second Labour Government, the Communist Party as a Labour Left-wing. It was evident again in the conflict at the World Congress on the colonial question when Comrades Rothstein and Bennett led the majority of the British delegation into theoretically defending the favourable perspectives for the British imperialists—"carrying through the industrialisation of India"—thus postponing the colonial revolutions and providing the economic basis for the "decolonisation" which they repudiated. It was the same lack of revolutionary perspectives and non-understanding of the rôle of the Party in this period that gave rise to the vote of the five comrades for the second Labour Government, the attempts of Comrade Campbell to revise the Sixth Congress resolution, the alignment of Comrade Horner with Herbert Smith and Joe Jones at the Blackpool Conference of the miners and to the bureaucratic stifling of the criticism of the Y.C.L. Executive by Comrades

Rothstein, Wilson, Inkpin and Watkins in their resolution of censure against Comrade Tapsell for reporting the proceedings of the C.C. meeting to the Y.C.L. political bureau. These definitely "Right tendencies" retard the development of the Party, hold it back from its independent course, isolate it from the masses and hinder the Party in its work of revolutionising the workers. These were the reasons for the isolation of the Party in recent years. The workers were ahead of us. When they wanted to leave the Labour Party and were breaking away in thousands we drove them back to the Labour Party because the face of the Party was towards the Labour Party and not towards the independent leadership of the workers. When the workers were revolting against the General Council of the Trades Union Congress we drove them away from us back under the control of the General Council. No wonder the Party has dwindled in membership and the circulation of the Party press suffered the same fate.

Since the Passing of the C.C. Resolution

It must not be thought that the passing of the C.C. resolution with its pledge to fight the "Right danger" and the removal of three comrades from the P.B. because of their "Right tendencies" has liquidated the Right danger in the leadership. Indeed, what with the anxiety of the "Rights" to prove themselves to be "Left," the Party leadership is in such a state of confusion that one almost stands aghast at the situation. I will illustrate this criticism. First examine the way in which the anti-war question is being handled and especially the Russo-Chinese crisis.

In *Workers' Life* of August 30, headlines of a splash article on the Russo-Chinese crisis proclaim: "Hostilities have broken out." It goes on to tell that we are on the brink of world war. We must "Organise demonstrations and strikes against the war-makers' Government." The first paragraph of the article qualifies the headlines. The second and the third paragraphs hold America responsible as the devil behind the Chinese Government. The fourth tells us that the Labour Government is assisting the Border States to prepare for war. But it does not say a word as to what the Labour Government is doing in relation to the Russo-Chinese war. How we shall get the British workers to strike against the Labour Government because America is pushing the Chinese on to war in Manchuria is not explained to us at all.

But the splash article goes on to talk to the Party members and not the masses. Perhaps under the circumstances this is

fortunate. At one moment there appears to be time enough to get a delegation to the twelfth anniversary of the Russian revolution in November. At the next it appears as if we have to rush into the streets for war is upon us. At the top of the page we are told that "Hostilities have broken out." At the end of the manifesto we are told "not to wait for hostilities to break out, but to strike now." Whether it is that the Party members who have to strike now or the workers in general, whether the Party has to call the strike itself or through a strike committee, and how long for *nobody knows*. What the immediate object of the strike will be, whether it is to stop munitions production or the transport of troops, whether it is to be a general strike, an attempt to bring down the Government or a demonstration strike, is left to our own conjecture.

Then, please turn up the next issue of *Workers' Life*, September 6th, and it will be found that the Russo-Chinese crisis has vanished into thin air *and nobody knows why*. There is no news of the strikes we were to call the previous week. No news of the world conflagration that was overwhelming us. This also has vanished. Surely we ought to have been told as to how this happened. But by September 13th the Russo-Chinese crisis quietly re-appears.

Can we hope to win influence amongst the workers so long as the most serious questions are treated in such an irresponsible manner? The Party appears to be wildly gesticulating and nothing happens, except that we continue to report decline in sales of Party papers. Is it surprising?

Independent Leadership

This however is not an isolated matter. The C.C. resolution speaks very clearly about the need for the Party to play the rôle of the independent leader of the workers' struggles. It also says that the M.M. is under the leadership of the Party. But it is necessary to raise the question as to whether the Party is *one* of *three* leaders or *the leader* of the workers' struggles. It is necessary because it appears from our press that there is a division of labour between the Party, the National Minority Movement and the National Unemployed Workers' Committee in this question of leadership.

According to the leading article of *Workers' Life*, August 16th, "To Shoreditch": "The Minority Movement is therefore confronted with the task of grouping all revolutionary elements together for the purpose of leading the independent economic

struggles of the workers against the will of the trades union bureaucracy. . . . Not the policy of 'Make the Leaders Fight,' not the mechanical formation of new unions, but the leadership of the economic struggles of the workers through the appropriate organs of struggle—that is the keynote of the new policy of the M.M." If the Minority Movement is to be the leader, where does the Communist Party come in? Ought we not to say in a leading article of the Party press that the Communist Party is therefore confronted with the task of grouping all revolutionary elements together into the Minority Movement for the purpose of leading the struggles of the workers, etc., etc.? I think so. But this leading article has no place for the Party. Instead of the Party leading organ being the vehicle for the P.B. to give the lead to the M.M. Conference, the Party organ is the means of giving the M.M. lead to the Party and the readers of its press.

This, of course, is not confined to the leading article. In the same issue of the paper splash headlines tell us: "Minority to give a real lead." This is the headline for two articles, one by Comrade Loeber and the other by Comrade Kerrigan, both of which could have been written by non-party members and the main purpose of which is to draw the attention of railwaymen and engineers to the M.M. Conference. Of course, it is necessary to direct attention to the M.M. Conference, but both these articles and others play no other rôle than a boost to the M.M. Comrade Cox has an article in the same issue based upon the principle of the M.M.'s independent leadership, and one is left wondering as to where the Party comes into the picture.

The next issue of the paper contains more of it. And so does the report of the M.M. Conference itself, both in *Workers' Life* and *The Worker*. Examine the list of speakers at the Conference reported in either paper and it will be found that almost every speaker is a Communist, and you can search in vain for a reference to the Communist Party. The Conference itself pledges to fight for the "Revolutionary Workers' Government" which means for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but no Communist ventures to say that the dictatorship of the proletariat without the Party of the proletarian dictatorship is unthinkable. And the platform of the Conference is dominated by Communists. Can we conceive of such reticence on the part of the trades unions towards the Labour Party?

This absence of Party leadership applies equally to the N.U.W.C.M. A reference to the articles of Comrade Hannington and Comrade Elias *re* the National Conference of the Unem-

ployed appearing in *Workers' Life*, August 16th and 23rd, and in *The Worker* of these dates, are articles which have nothing to do with the Party. From a reading of these articles it would appear that the Communist paper *Workers' Life* has kindly given space to the leaders of the N.U.W.C.M. to advertise their conference. Again I would emphasise that it was necessary to boost the Conference. But has the Party no special message to the Unemployed Conference, no lead to give?

Comrade Hannington evidently has other ideas, for he has defined for us in the article of August 23rd in *The Worker* what he thinks of the situation. He says, writing of the M.M. and the N.U.W.C.M., "Both movements have their special fields of activity—the M.M. in the workshop, factories and mines, and the N.U.W.C.M. on the streets, leading the agitation of the unemployed against central and local government authorities for the defence and improvement of the standards of those divorced from industry." Again we must ask: What is the special field of the Communist Party? It is necessary to ask because none of the articles give the answer. They have wiped out the Party instead of revealing the Party as the leader of all struggles of the workers. The N.U.W.C.M. conference repeats the performance of the M.M. declaring for the Revolutionary Workers' Government without the Communist Party.

Thus is the rôle of the Party forgotten by its leaders.

Ultra-Leftism

But the chaotic condition of the leadership under the pressure of its anxiety to prove free from "Right" tendencies, receives its classic expression in the new ruling as to the relations of our Party to the Labour Government and the struggle for immediate demands. At the last meeting of the National Meerut Defence Committee I attended as the representative of our Party. In this meeting we had to consider what steps we could take to further the purpose of the Committee at the Labour Party Conference. It was unanimously agreed that to allow the occasion of the Conference to go by without an effort being made to mobilise opinion against the Government would be an exceedingly wrong thing to do, especially in view of the fact that a half-dozen Labour M.P's were members of the Meerut Committee and would be present at the Conference. I therefore put forward, along with a number of other suggestions for meetings, etc., the proposal that a meeting be called of all the members of the Meerut Defence Committee attending the Labour Party Conference, that a special

resolution be prepared, an attempt be made to get it on the floor of the Conference as an emergency resolution and that a demonstrative protest be made with it whether the Standing Orders Committee permitted it to go on the agenda or not.

I informed the Secretariat of my proposals and I received the following letter in reply:

> "The Secretariat desires to draw your attention to paragraph *d* in your letter, where you ask that an emergency resolution of protest against the trial, *demanding* the release of the prisoners and condemning the Labour Government, etc., be put forward. It is no part of the new line that we deceive the workers by asking them to demand anything from the Labour Government, but that we call upon the workers to *fight* the Labour Government. We thought it necessary to draw your attention to this Right-wing deviation.
>
> Yours fraternally,
>
> THE SECRETARIAT."

Here is a remarkable situation. We are to demand and the workers are to demand *nothing* of the Labour Government! This has got the psuedo Lefts beaten to a frazzle. They and the Right-wing only plead that "we don't embarrass the Government" and "give the Government a chance" but we, well, we are nothing if we are not whole hoggers—we beg the workers to ask nothing at all!

But what an anomalous situation we are in. It is permissible for the Secretariat itself to *enter into negotiations with the Labour Government* to send a political adviser to the prisoners, but it is not permissible to demand that the same Labour Government release the prisoners!

"But," says the Secretariat, "the workers must fight the Labour Government." What the issues of the fight are to be if we have got no demands and the workers have got no demands is not explained. Are we driven into complete ultra-Leftism and to call on the workers to immediately seize power and establish the Revolutionary Workers' Government? It would appear so. For I am told in a further letter: "Capitalism cannot afford 'concessions,' and the only way to obtain them is through the defeat of the capitalist class in open struggle." When I asked the question "Suppose we organise a strike on behalf of the Meerut prisoners, against whom will it be directed in this case? Against the Labour Government. How will it express itself?" Instead of answering—in the demand for the release of the

prisoners—I receive the following: "It will express itself in conjunction with the growing struggle on the other issues, in a fight for the overthrow of the Labour Government and for developing the mass struggle for the Revolutionary Workers' Government."

But I did not ask what this strike will express itself "in conjunction with." This was not under discussion. The fact is we cannot call a strike with the slogan "in conjunction with." The workers only strike for something concrete and specific. We cannot go to them and say the Labour Government are a lot of rotters, down with it and up with the Revolutionary Workers' Government. Yet this is the essence of the reply of the Secretariat. Nor can we go and say to the workers: "Without the overthrow of the Labour Government nothing can be done for the Meerut prisoners (except sending them legal advice and a political adviser), otherwise there will be no action at all."

It is quite evident that the Secretariat has here fallen into ultra-Leftism when it says nothing can be gained "except by the defeat of the capitalist class in open struggle." This is putting the question of insurrection in a non-Marxist way. If the Communist programme is any guide to us on this question, and I believe it is, then instead of there being no demands made upon the Government of the day in the period leading up to insurrectionary struggles, the immediate demands will increase a thousandfold, will become increasingly radical and more far reaching. It is the inability of the Government of the day and the capitalist class as a whole to meet these demands that forces into the foreground of the workers' struggle the issue of overthrowing the Government and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the task of the Communist Party in this period not to put forward the slogan "Demand nothing of the Government," but to place itself at the head of every demand of the workers, to relate it to the revolutionary struggle for power. This is not done by dropping the demands but by bringing them "into conjunction with" other demands and merging them into the struggle for power. The programme of the Communist International says (p. 63): "Partial demands and slogans generally form an essential part of correct tactics; but certain transition slogans go inseparably with revolutionary situation. Repudiation of partial demands and transitional slogans 'on principle,' however, is incompatible with the tactical principles of Communism, for in effect, such repudiation condemns the Party to inaction and isolates it from the masses."

To demand nothing, therefore, is a manifest absurdity for the Communist Party.

More "Leftism"

But there is still another aspect of this question. The Secretariat, in its letter of October 2nd, 1929, says: "When the textile workers were attacked, did we call upon the General Council to demand the withdrawal of the reductions? . . . . What then are we to say when it is seriously argued that we should invite the Labour Party Conference (Thomas, Henderson, Clynes and Co.) to 'condemn' and to 'demand' of the Labour Government (Thomas, Henderson, Clynes and Co.) the release of the Meerut prisoners? The whole of your polemic is actually a case for reformism."

Let us be perfectly clear, the proposal was not that the Communist Party call upon the Labour Party Conference to demand this or that, although the Secretariat itself instructed Comrade Mrs. Knight to go to the Conference and make such a demand. The proposal was that the members of the Labour Party who were also members of the Meerut Defence Committee pledged to fight for the release of the prisoners, shall make this demand and get as many of the Labour Party Conference as possible to support them, obviously against the platform as well as against the Government. A defeat of the platform on this occasion was a censure of the Government.

It is an absurdity to treat the Labour Party Conference as simply Thomas, Henderson and Clynes and Co. This is to reject all possibilities of differentiation in the Labour Party and to make the line of the C.C. resolution relating to the development of Left forces in the Labour Party into a farce. Here we were faced with the fact that the Labour forces were so far differentiated that a number of M.P.'s and delegates were part of a united front committee associating with us in the demand for the release of the prisoners. Is it conceivable that we could say to these men, "Go to the Labour Party Conference and be silent on the Meerut question"? If so, then the Communist Party will be placed in the most absurd position imaginable. It demands nothing itself and calls on others to demand nothing. In short, gives the Labour Government a free hand.

It was necessary to put forward such demands not only because it is the obvious, commonsense thing to do, but also to hasten forward the differentiation within the Labour Party on the one hand and sort out the Lefts from the pseudo-Lefts. To allow M.P.'s and others to become members of the Committee and then to acquiesce in their silence instead of putting up to them the line

of battle, is not the way to expose the pseudo-Lefts and bring the fighters into our ranks, but the line of isolation and disaster. The Party must avoid treating either the Meerut Trial or any other single issue in an isolated way. We must link it up with the class fight, indeed, show it as part of the class fight so that the Party as the leader of all the struggles can bring these struggles to merge and concentrate upon the central issues in the fight for the proletarian dictatorship.

Conclusions

These blunders, which could easily be supplemented by still further evidence of the strength of the "Right-wing danger" (ultra-Leftism is a part of it), illustrate the deadly seriousness of the situation of the Party at this moment when everything is crying aloud for the Party of proletarian revolution to step forward boldly and systematically set about its tasks as the only leader of the workers in the class war. Leadership of the workers is not won by wildly gesticulating and dashing hither and thither to catch up with the struggle but by thoroughly understanding the period in which we struggle, defining clearly the perspectives before the workers, defining the basic tasks of the Party and setting about them planfully and systematically.

The C.C. resolution must, therefore, be thoroughly reconstructed by the Congress so that the Party and the workers will have a clear presentation of the principal features of the "third period" in Britain, will see it as a period of the maturing of the revolutionary crisis, will understand the line or the principal "motif" of the Party's tasks, will see clearly the vastness of the mistakes that have been made and understand their character, and know how to systematically set about the eliminating of the "Right danger" from top to bottom of the Party. If the Party can emerge with such a reconstructed resolution and a new leadership really accepting the resolution to put it into life, then the Party can advance with confidence.

Our Party and the New Period

By REG. GROVES

THE resolution of the Tenth Plenum on "The International Situation" speaks of the "sharply marked radicalisation of the international working class, and the *rising of the new wave of the revolutionary labour movement.*"

To no country does this apply more than to Great Britain, and it is because our Party has failed to grasp this fact that its influence has been seriously weakened at the very time when it should be rapidly growing. The resolution of the Central Committee on "The Tasks of the C.P.G.B." displays the same failure to grasp the central feature of the present period, and there is a danger that the tremendous opportunities before our Party will not be utilised to the fullest extent.

What is the central feature of the present period, the feature which becomes increasingly clear every day? *It is that in Britain we are rapidly approaching a revolutionary crisis, greater in magnitude than that precipitated by the events of* 1926.

A comparison between the period leading up to the General Strike, the General Strike itself, and the present period, will make this point clearer and show how tremendous are the issues involved.

The defeats of 1921-2 were followed by a slow, painful, but steady revival. By the middle of 1923 signs were not wanting that the wave of working class struggle was rising and that ahead were big battles.

Then, as now, the bosses placed in office a Labour Government to canalise the growing revolt of the workers. Then, as is happening now, the rising revolt passed by the Labour Government and mounted swiftly to Red Friday and the gigantic struggle of 1926. Then, as now, the crisis was marked in the staple industries, textiles, coal, transport, etc. But it is not so much the similarity between then and now as the differences that marks the future struggle.

The chief features of the period 1925-6 were: (1) The serious

position of the heavy industries. (2) The wave of militancy found its expression through the trade unions. The existence of the "Lefts" on the General Council strengthened the belief that the trade union leadership could be made to fight; the Minority Movement acted the part of a ginger group, gingering up the leadership, and as a result the leadership of the struggle was in the hands of the reformists from start to finish. (3) The strike marked the end of the period when it was possible for the radicalisation of the workers to find expression through the unions or to influence the leadership. (4) It marked the end of *reformist* unions; from then on they developed into capitalist unions. This is more fully dealt with in the article, "Mondism and our Industrial Policy" in the July *Communist Review*. (5) Even in the limited form that the conditions imposed on the strike, the revolutionary nature of the struggle was clearly demonstrated. It brought the working class against the boss class and their State machine. It showed that in the era of capitalist decline every struggle of importance, whatever the nominal issues over which it is fought, raises the issue of political power. It demonstrated the need for a mass revolutionary Party—a lesson which we failed to drive home to the workers in the days that followed.

The above are the chief features of the events of 1925-6. What are the chief features of the present period and the differences between then and now?

Firstly, the crisis in the heavy industries is deeper in revolutionary content (*e.g.*, cotton, coal, railways, etc. For railways, see Purkis' article in the *Labour Monthly*, Oct. 1929). The crisis is more pregnant with revolutionary possibilities because of the fact that the re-organisation methods of the bosses will not solve but will intensify the problems that British capitalism has to face. This means not one attack but a developing, extending attack on the workers, and a weakening of the position of the bourgeoisie. The wave of working class resistance to rationalisation is developing more rapidly and affects not only the main industries, but also the newer industries, such as motors, artificial silk, etc. Secondly, not only the organised workers are involved, but also the unorganised.

Thirdly, the pressure of events is driving the labour and trade union leadership more and more openly to reveal their rôle of wage-cutters, rationalisers, and strike-breakers. More especially is the Labour Government revealing to the workers the nature of its policy. *This is shattering the illusions of large masses of workers* and forcing them to look elsewhere for leadership.

The developments in the colonies, especially India, where a revolutionary crisis is rapidly developing, are of a more decisive character than the crisis of 1920-21. The chief feature of these struggles is the active independent struggle of the indian workers and peasants against the British and Indian bourgeoisie.

The immediate danger of war, which reflects the sharpening of international antagonisms, is as yet unrealised by large masses of the workers, and still not properly understood by many of our Party members.

The above are briefly some of the main factors which must influence our policy. The following points of importance arise.

The growing resistance of the workers, both in the basic industries and in the luxury trades to rationalisation, offers big possibilities to our Party at the present time. We must recognise that the old methods of work, the street corner meetings, the publicity stunts, are of little value in the present period; that we are faced with the fact that we either get our roots in the factories, gain the leadership of the workers on the job, or else cease to count as a political force. The methods of building up our work in the factories, depots, mills and mines, have been outlined in the Tenth Plenum resolutions, and elsewhere. One point, however, needs to be stressed, a point of more importance than is generally realised. Our propaganda must be the propaganda of a working class party; our appeal and lead must be simple, clear, and direct; we must speak not as an outside body issuing Press statements and proclamations, but as the vanguard of the working class.

Through all the main issues of the day we must rally the workers against the Labour Government which is the central political issue of the present period. Comrade Dutt, in the September *Communist Review,* has outlined the policy that should be adopted in the struggle against the Labour Government—an outline of policy which every Party member should study carefully.

The central issue, around which all other issues are being fought in India, is the Meerut Trial. The Tyneside resolution, which is apparently both the first and the last word on the situation at home and abroad, criticises the leads issued through the Party press in connection with our campaign for the release ot the Meerut prisoners. What the Tyneside resolution and all other critics have failed to see is *that the Meerut campaign has been run on the old lines, and that these mistakes are only a reflection of that fact.* It is clear that we must build up class unity between the British and Indian workers; it is clear that the very nature of

the situation in India demands more than words of protest and the resolutions that "Left" Labour M.P.'s, as well as our Party, are putting forward.

This campaign, which has been run as a campaign of protest and has been grossly neglected by our Party, must be extended throughout the whole country, must be utilised as part of our attack on the Labour Government, and must be a means of establishing class solidarity between the British and Indian working class. The objective of such a campaign must be a political demonstration of a large number of workers against the Labour Government and in support of the struggling Indian workers. In other words, we must aim at so influencing the workers on this issue as to be able to get strike action in the near future. This must be done not in the manner that the slogan for strike action on August 1st was handled, but in a practical way. If we show the workers firstly that the Indian workers are fighting the same enemies as the British workers, secondly that the Labour Government is carrying on and extending the terrorist policy of British imperialism in India, if we show them that a victory for the Indian workers is a victory for the British workers, then there is no reason why we should not get a ready response from large numbers of workers.

The recent London conference of the National Meerut Defence Committee shows how ready is the response of the workers to the appeal of the Indian workers, how instinctively they are prepared to line up with their own class against the Labour Government.

Our Party should immediately consider ways and means of developing this campaign.

The danger of war is intensified in the present period because of the development of productivity power and the shrinking of markets. All capitalist countries are rationalising; every new machine, every amalgamation, and every wage cut, merely results in competing countries taking similar steps, and in the intensification of the struggle for markets.

We have failed in the past to drive home to the workers the fact that war can break out under capitalism on a hundred different fronts at any moment. We have also failed to make clear to the workers our policy in relation to the danger of war. The August 1st campaign was an illustration not only of this fact, but also is an example of how not to run a campaign. The strike slogan was issued at the beginning of the campaign "A general strike against war"; it became in a few days "A one-day strike

against war"; it dwindled to "A half-hour strike against war." The first four sets of leaflets issued during the campaign contained no reference to the strike slogan, and our own Party did not know why they should call for a strike on Red Day, and what were the politics of Red Day. The failure to link up in a correct manner the economic issues affecting the workers, the state of the Party and the confusion which surrounded the campaign, the disastrous "bus incident," completed the campaign which served little purpose except to reveal openly that which had been long concealed, the small influence of our Party.

Our propaganda on war must be more reasoned, more simple, more definite: we must develop an illegal apparatus; we must set out to develop anti-militarist work.

Bound up in every phase of the struggle is the slogan of "The revolutionary workers' government." The very use of the slogan by our Party leadership shows how little its meaning is grasped. Apparently it is assumed that the addition of the slogan "Fight for a revolutionary workers' government" makes a document politically correct. Take two or three recent examples: the *Textile Battle Front* No. 6, brings in this slogan after *eight* other slogans, without saying in any way what is meant, or what connection a revolutionary workers' government has with the woollen workers' struggle. In the same way the *Cotton Lock-Out Special*, No. 2, states that "The only solution to this and all future struggles is a revolutionary workers' government." What they mean by "a solution to all struggles" is not explained.

The slogan of "A revolutionary workers' government" is only a real, live, slogan because the struggle for power is not the struggle of the remote future, but is a struggle going on now. It is through struggle that our class learns the necessity for seizing power; it is through struggle that we strengthen our class and weaken the ruling class; *it is through struggle that the necessity for a revolutionary party of the workers is manifested.* Thus this slogan is part of our struggle to-day, a living part of every struggle of the working class, and must be made a part of our struggle.

One word on the Congress. These and other issues confront the Congress. This Congress can mark the first step in the rapid development of our Party, or it can mark a set-back. It is of vital importance that a new leadership be elected, bringing in a large proportion of new comrades who have shown by their workshop and Party work that they are capable comrades with a clear understanding of the nature of the new period.

If this Congress can elect a new leadership and can revitalise

the membership, if we can drive home to our Party members the rôle and the importance of our party in the new period, if we can carry to the workers the certainty, the conviction and the spirit of confidence and victory which alone can come from our Party, then we shall see within the next twelve months the growth of our Party membership and influence.

The mass Party is possible in the near future; it is for this Congress to take the first steps towards its realisation.

"The Tasks of the Party"

STATEMENT OF THE LONDON DISTRICT PARTY COMMITTEE ON THE C.C. RESOLUTION

Foreword

THE London District Party Committee considers that the resolution is an improvement on the resolutions previously placed in front of the Party for discussion at Party Congresses.

This improvement is shown in the attempt to examine the political experiences of the Party and to point out the mistakes committed by the Party in the development of its work. There is also shown an understanding that the conditions of inner-Party life are a factor of serious importance in the development of our political line. However, in spite of these improvements, the D.P.C. considers that the resolution is too shallow politically considering the situation facing the Party.

The "Third Period," with its great intensification of imperialist rivalries and the consequent growth of the war danger; the increasing preparation for an attack on Soviet Russia; the rising tide of colonial revolution; the sharpening of the internal contradictions of capitalism; the growing revolt of the workers in the capitalist countries; the increasing political character of their struggles; the rôle of Social-Democracy as the organiser of the forces of capitalist counter-revolution; all show that the class struggle is taking forms of a more fundamental character. Our resolutions should be of a character to meet the situation. It is from this viewpoint that we base our criticism of the resolution.

The International Situation

The Communist International as the organiser of the forces of revolution is a factor of tremendous importance in the world situation. The resolution, while indicating the rôle of Social-Democracy, gives no indication of the great importance of the Comintern, nor of its sections, thus omitting one of the chief factors in estimating the forces at work in the "Third Period."

Paragraph 40 of the resolution states: "Our failure to develop deep discussions throughout the Party on questions affect-

ing our brother parties of the C.I. is also a source of great weakness. It not only shows an under-estimation of internationalism, but prevents the Party from gaining from the experience of other parties, as a result of their participation in active struggles against capitalism, or as a result of inner-Party struggles against Trotskyism, the Right-wingers and the conciliators." There is shown here a consciousness of the importance of the experiences and rôle of the sections of the Comintern, but in the estimation of the international situation where this is of prime importance no mention of them appears.

Paragraph 11 states: "We completely endorse the measures that have been taken by the E.C.C.I. in the struggles against the Right-wingers and the conciliators in its own ranks and in the parties. . . ." This statement presupposes that the Party as a whole has a fair knowledge of the inner-Party situation of these sections. This information the Party has not got and for the Party to understand this statement it must have in its possession more complete information.

The statement contains no mention of the Chinese revolution. Are we to assume from this omission that the E.C. is of the opinion that the situation in China is so hopeless that the Chinese revolution is no longer a serious factor in the world situation? That the forces working for revolution have been so hopelessly defeated as to be no longer of serious consequence?

Paragraph 62, under the section "Tasks of the Party," shows that the E.C. knows that the Chinese revolution is still of serious importance, it states: "The revival of revolutionary mass activity in China, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, makes it essential for the Party to prepare the working class for active intervention on the side of the Chinese revolution. . . ." To state this as one of the tasks of the Party without stating the political necessity for the tasks is obviously wrong. The Chinese revolution is of great importance. Its importance must be stated and its relation to the world situation explained and the Party politically prepared for its active intervention on behalf of our Chinese comrades.

With the above exceptions we agree with the general estimation of the International situation.

Great Britain and the "Third Period"

We agree with the statement of the general objective situation in Great Britain in the E.C. resolution, that is, that there is:

(1) An intensification of world antagonisms;
(2) A developing capitalist crisis;

(3) An intense rationalisation drive;
(4) A growing revolt of the workers which is becoming increasingly political in character;
(5) An open alliance of the reformists with capitalism to smash this revolt;
(6) An increasing differentiation amongst the workers, with increasing danger from the pseudo-Lefts;

all leading to the necessity for developing the *political struggle* into a struggle for a Revolutionary Workers' Government.

On the basis of this analysis the central feature of the resolution should be the question of developing the struggle around the slogan of the Revolutionary Workers' Government. The D.P.C. considers that the central question for the Party is the Revolutionary Workers' Government. That all other questions must be related to this central task. That this question should be clearly defined in the resolution.

Instead, this question is left to Paragraph 45, "The task of the Party is to independently lead the working class in all its struggles, to win over the majority of the working class and to lead them in the struggle for a Revolutionary Workers' Government." The question is then left, and the rest of the resolution deals with practical questions.

Unless the Party sees clearly the revolutionary outlook in front of it, it will be unable to prepare itself or the workers for the revolutionary struggles ahead. The Revolutionary Workers' Government means a revolutionary struggle for power, and the central question for the Party is the preparation of itself and the working class for that struggle. Until this fundamental question is clearly understood by the Party it will continue to go from struggle to struggle without fully appreciating the significance of those struggles, or securing the full results from them. The absence of this basic political line is the course of the day-to-day approach to our problems which is at present at the root of the Party difficulties. Unless the Party relates its everyday struggles to the fundamental one of revolution it will continue to repeat its mistakes and will not be able to prepare itself for the task of revolution.

The streamer in *Workers' Life* is one indication of what is happening repeatedly: "A 'Daily' a day will keep wage-cuts away." Such a statement is simply nonsensical when we know the nature of the struggles in front of the workers. *The task of the "Daily" is to help the Party to organise the forces of revolution.* Viewed in this light the tremendous political and

organisational importance of the "Daily" is clear, and the root error in the slogan referred to is shown to be political.

Our statement of this question must not be taken to imply that we believe the Party to be facing an immediate revolutionary situation and that insurrection is the order of the day, but that the intensification of class antagonisms arising in the present period is placing sharply in front of the Party and the working class the need for preparing towards revolutionary struggle for power.

This central question facing the Party also means that the Party organisation must be examined to see how far it corresponds to present requirements. When examined from this point of view the necessity for concentration of the Party forces on the decisive sections of the working class becomes urgent and clear. Factory work, when approached from this angle, assumes quite a new significance, and is clearly related to the question of leadership in locals, Districts and at the Centre.

In the section "Great Britain and the Third Period," the question of rationalisation is not sufficiently clearly examined. The formulation given in Paragraph 15 leaves the impression that rationalisation is only concerned with the re-organisation of technical equipment, etc., whereas the Tenth Plenum stated that rationalisation is mainly an intensification of the labour processes. This should be clearly stated in the resolution; the emphasis in the past has been on the technical aspect of rationalisation.

The statement of the situation facing the Party shows that we have the basis for a mass revolutionary party, provided that we grasp the point laid down by the Tenth Plenum and stated in Paragraph 18: "The more decisively the Communist Party of Great Britain eradicates all remnants of Right opportunist deviations in its ranks and carries out a correct Bolshevik policy, sharpening the struggles of the workers against the so-called Labour Government, the more rapidly will the working class of Great Britain realise that the policy of the Communist Party of Great Britain—"Class Against Class"—during the recent General Election was the only correct one. They will see that this policy facilitates the emancipation of broad masses of the workers from parliamentary and pacifist illusions and points the true path to the victory of the working class." The resolution, when examined from this angle, contains many weaknesses particularly in the sections "The Situation in the Party" and "The Tasks of the Party."

The Situation in the Party

The E.C. states that the chief cause of the present position in the Party is the Right mistakes committed by the leadership. It also states (Paragraph 12): "The chief inner task of all sections of the C.I. is the relentless fight against the Right danger, which is the most serious danger. The ranks of the parties must be completely purged of all Right and conciliatory tendencies. . . ." (Paragraph 13): "... The C.C. of the C.P.G.B. strongly emphasises that unless a bitter fight, by organisational means as well as ideological means, is waged against the Right-wing and conciliatory tendencies, the parties will be unable to fre themselves from the paralysing effects of this opportunist poison. Without the cleansing of the parties, there can be no success in the fight for the winning over of the majority of the working classes. . . ."

How does the C.C. work out these points in practice? They state (Paragraph 27): "... The C.C. welcomes the strong and healthy spirit of self-criticism now reigning in the Party as evidenced in the resolutions of the London, Manchester and Newcastle D.P.C's. . . ." If that criticism is healthy and to be welcomed, what must be said of the attitude of the comrades who attended the London aggregate on behalf of the E.C.? The attitude of Comrade Rothstein and Comrade Wilson showed an absolute lack of understanding of the responsibility of leadership in our Party or of the rôle of self-criticism. Comrade Inkpin's attitude at this meeting also showed him to be in agreement with them. Why is the C.C. silent on the attitude of these comrades at this meeting? If our attitude is to be commended then the attitude of these comrades cannot be too strongly condemned.

Paragraph 28 states that the "situation shows the necessity for making immediate changes in the leadership, in order to guarantee the carrying out of the Comintern line and the carrying on of a persistent daily struggle against the Right danger which is deep-rooted in the daily life and traditions of the Party." Paragraph 29 states: "The C.C. therefore resolves to remove three members of the Politbureau and Secretariat and to strengthen these organs. . . ."

The C.C. removes three comrades whom it considers are of danger to the Party, but does not explain to the Party why these comrades were removed. This is not waging a "bitter ideological fight" against the Right danger. If the interests of the Party demanded the removal of these comrades, then the political reasons for their removal must be made clear to the Party. Further, if these comrades are a danger to the Party, why are they given

responsible positions in the Party? Is this also an example of how to wage a "bitter organisational and ideological struggle against the Right Wing"? Comrade Rothstein has been guilty of a series of serious Right errors. He was one of the majority who voted against the E.C.C.I. proposal to change our line. His treatment in *Workers' Life* of the new line as adopted at the Ninth Plenum caused great confusion in the Party and the working class, and contributed a great deal to the misunderstanding in the Party of the new line. At the Glasgow conference, Comrade Rothstein was so confused as to the new line that he succeeded in getting the conference to adopt the Ninth Plenum resolution and also the E.C. resolution, on the grounds that both were identical. At the Sixth World Congress, in the discussions on the Colonial resolution, Comrade Rothstein persistently pursued a wrong line in regard to India, a question of serious importance to the British Party. He at first opposed the unqualified acceptance of the criticisms in the Closed Letter of the E.C.C.I. On the question of voting for the Labour Party candidates, Comrade Rothstein, on the eve of the General Election, expressed himself in favour of advising the workers to support the Labour candidates in those constituencies where the Party had no candidates. These persistent mistakes by Comrade Rothstein show that he does not understand the new line of the Party, and so is unfitted for the leadership of the Party.

Comrade Inkpin has been in charge of the administration and business side of Party work. From the fact that the E.C. has removed Comrade Inkpin, he has evidently failed in this work. If he has not been competent in his work at the centre, *why* is he given the task of going to the Party in the provinces to tighten up the administrative work?

The Central Committee, if it is to pursue a "bitter" fight against the Right-wing elements in our Party, must do so on political grounds and not work on the lines of organisational reshufflings.

Paragraph 29 states: "There is also a certain amount of unprincipledness to be observed, which is expressed in a willingness to change position because of convenience and not of conviction." *Why* are not such comrades exposed by the E.C.? The possibility of their retention on the E.C. through the Party not knowing them is unthinkable, and can only lead to serious consequences for the Party.

To the catalogue of mistakes we will add two of primary importance—the International Red Day Campaign, and the treat-

ment of the Revolutionary Workers' Government. The E.C.C.I. has already drawn attention to the Red Day Campaign, and we shall not dwell on that.

The treatment in *Workers' Life*, since the General Election, of the question of the Revolutionary Workers' Government shows that this has been regarded purely as a parliamentary question. This treatment of the question further emphasises the need for a fuller understanding of the matter in the Party.

These two points must be more fully dealt with by the E.C. and the lessons drawn from these mistakes.

Paragraph 39 states: "... Recent events show that the C.C. has been completely out of touch with important districts. The lines of the main discussion in the Party Executive have not been communicated to the membership...." Has this been altered as a result of the resolution? *It has not.*

The C.C. held one of the most exhaustive discussions it has ever held, lasting for five days. The main lines of discussion have not been communicated to the Party. It is no use stating in the resolution that this must be done, and yet not do it. In an attempt to meet the lack of contact between the Centre and the districts, the Centre has sent some of its leading members to work in the districts. In principle this is good, but it is not sufficient for these comrades to attend D.P.C. meetings or Bureau meetings; these comrades must take an active part in the political life of the districts.

Paragraph 44 states: "The failure to understand the real meaning of the C.I. Letter was shown in the fact that the previous meeting of the C.C. rejected proposals for strengthening the Political Bureau and discussed these proposals from the standpoint of re-shuffling, and not as essential political measures." In our opinion the composition of the Political Bureau was political. It was no accident that Comrade Brown was the proposer of the new Political Bureau, which was predominantly Right. Comrade Brown, in the discussions on the new Party line was in the majority who opposed the Comintern line, and the proposal to elect such a P.B. was a political gesture in itself. This must be recognised by the E.C. and stated to the Party.

The Tasks of the Party

The treatment of the resolution in this section shows that the E.C. has failed to understand the real singificance of the present position facing the Party.

Paragraph 8 states: "The new wave of mass struggles, which is the principal new feature in the situation since the Sixth

World Congress, are the preliminary engagements of a new period of revolutionary struggles for power, which will call for the maximum clarity and fighting capacity on the part of the Communist Parties. . . ." Paragraph 10: "This task demands . . . the carrying on of a bitter struggle for the independent revolutionary leadership of the masses. . . ."

This adds emphasis to our points regarding the inadequate treatment of the question of the Revolutionary Workers' Government. But a concrete example of the "day-to-day approach" already referred to, is to be found in the way in which the Party concentrated on the cotton textile industry while the situation was immediately critical, but ceased its concentration after the Award was published, although subsequently there was evidence of willingness to struggle on the part of the workers.

Similarly, the developing mining crisis and latterly the critical railway situation have been largely ignored until they were almost mature.

Part of the practical tasks of the Party, as stated in the E.C. resolution, is the extension of our united front work, and the more extensive use of subsidiary organisations for this purpose. We agree that this is absolutely essential; that the intensification of the class struggle will render these more important than ever as a basis for this development. This indicates the increasing importance of these organisations, and raises sharply the extension of organisational and political assistance and control by the C.C. over these organisations.

The D.P.C. is of the opinion that the revolutionary political leadership of the Party should be clearly acknowledged. Many of the anomalies which now exist in the work of these organisations would disappear once this is established.

The question of Party leadership in this period is also of great importance.

Paragraph 8 of the Resolution states: "... This perspective raises the question of the Bolshevik leadership of the parties to one of the most decisive importance." The D.P.C. is of the opinion that a real solution to this question will be found to the extent that we succeed in leading the working class into decisive struggles against capitalism; to that extent will a party leadership grow that is steeled in revolutionary leadership. With this qualification the D.P.C. agrees that a temporary solution would be found in the combination of the best of the old elements with the best of the new. This question needs the fullest examination by the Party before the Party Congress, the D.P.C. therefore sug-

gests that the proposed executive list should be placed before the Party as soon as possible.

The War Danger and Illegality

Paragraph 4: "... In this situation every Communist Party must take steps to meet the menace of suppression by preparing the Party for a period of illegality." In this short sentence the question is stated and dismissed. This is not sufficient. The Party must fully discuss illegality as a political question, so that it will be prepared for the eventuality as it arises. A brief sentence in the resolution or the preparation of organisational measures by the centre is insufficient to prepare the Party.

Paragraph 64: "... The Central Committee must recognise the need for overhauling the various business enterprises connected with the Party with a view not only to their economical working, but to their extension...." So the question is stated in the resolution. In practice we have a perfect example of conciliation with Right elements. A commission was set up to enquire into questions affecting the Party press, this commission, during the course of its investigations, requested the management of the press to provide certain figures and information which it considered necessary to its work. The management of the press refused to supply this information and the question was referred to the P.B. The Secretariat, acting on behalf of the P.B., discussed the question with the management of the press, and a three hours' discussion ensued, after which the matter ended by the Secretariat appointing the management of the press *en bloc* on to the Commission, which had been appointed to enquire amongst other things into their administration.

The D.P.C. is of the opinion that the time for such manœuvrings has long since passed and that disciplinary action should have been taken against the comrades concerned. There must be a bitter and ruthless fight against such elements in our Party.

In conclusion the politics of the resolution must be considerably deepened; our political resolutions should be an education in themselves for the Party membership of revolutionary theory and practice. The central task of revolution must be clearly stated, and the practical tasks arising therefrom. From this the revolutionary consciousness of the Party would be deepened; this will develop the driving force which will enable the Party to overcome difficulties and build up the revolutionary forces for a proletarian revolution.

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